

International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

General Session of the Commission, University of Maryland, 4 July 1990

Present: Prof Dr O. Kraus (President) in the Chair: Commissioners Bock, Cogger, Corliss, Heppell, Lehtinen, Minelli, Ride, Savage, Schuster and Thompson. Dr Tubbs (Executive Secretary), Mrs Gentry and Mr Smith from the Secretariat also present. The President welcomed Dr Bock and Prof Minelli as new members of the Commission attending their first meeting.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Commissioners Bayer, Cocks, Dupuis, Hahn, Halvorsen, Holthuis, Kabata, Macpherson, Mahnert, Martins de Souza, Mroczkowski, Nielsen, Nye, Starobogatov, Trjapitzin, Uéno and Willink.

2. The minutes of the previous General Session of the Commission (Canberra, October 1988) as published in BZN 46: 7–12 were accepted and signed. The report of the Section of Zoological Nomenclature (Canberra, October 1988) as published in BZN 46: 14–18 was discussed.

3. *Specialist Nomenclature Committees*

A number of Specialist Nomenclature Committees established by relevant Congresses now existed and were available to assist the Commission by advising on applications submitted to the Commission and the impact of such applications on taxonomy. However, there were some areas where there was a fear that the existence of such a committee would impinge on the freedom of taxonomists. It was stressed that Nomenclature Committees would need to be recognized as being committees of the Commission. If their role was to be widened to areas such as compiling and considering registers of names, it was important to spell out clearly the role of the committees. In this context, Prof Bock agreed to draw up draft Terms of Reference for Nomenclature Committees based on his experience of the Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature (SCON) of the International Ornithological Congress. The importance of proceeding with the establishment of Specialist Nomenclature Committees in appropriate areas that did not yet have them was agreed.

4. *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*

Dr Tubbs reported that in 1989 there were 327 subscribers to the *Bulletin* from 45 countries. As an experiment to assess the demand, the International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature was introducing a subscription for individual zoologists wishing to receive offprints of all cases in particular areas. Initially this would cover the Crustacea and the Mollusca.

5. *Official Lists and Indexes of Names and Works in Zoology*

In the three years since publication 481 copies of this book had been sold and a further 51 copies had been distributed free to Commissioners, reviewers, etc. A supplement listing all the additional entries in the five years since compilation of the book would be issued early in 1991. It was suggested that there would be advantage in providing the updated book for sale on disk in addition to book form. It was agreed

that production on disk would be explored with Biosis for report to the next meeting at Amsterdam.

6. *Financial Position*

Dr Tubbs said that the Trust's expenditure in 1990 would be about matched by income. Expenditure would be lower than anticipated due to a temporary saving in salary arising from the resignation of a member of the Secretariat and to economies in printing costs by providing copy on disk. Income was higher than expected mainly due to an increased contribution from the American Association for Zoological Nomenclature and donations from a number of countries that had not recently provided support, particularly Australia, Germany, South Africa, Spain and Japan. The Commission expressed warm appreciation to those institutions and individuals that had made contributions enabling the Commission's work to continue and progress, and also to those whose efforts had led to such contributions being made.

It had recently been suggested that a European Association for Zoological Nomenclature should be established with the objective of furthering the interests of the Commission's work and of co-ordinating financial support for the Trust. Fifteen European countries had Commissioners or Trustees who would be well placed to co-ordinate activities within their own countries. Dr Macpherson had offered to provide overall co-ordination from Spain. Commissioners welcomed the proposition and **RESOLVED** to work towards the establishment of such an Association. It was suggested that a first step forward would be for Dr Macpherson to write to representatives in each European country requesting a list of institutions and individuals who might be approached for support.

It was known that some countries were unable to contribute research council or other government support to an organisation based abroad, such as the Trust. However, it might be possible for such countries to make additional contributions to I.U.B.S. earmarked for the Trust. Such contributions from government sources would be additional to funds generated by the European Association for Zoological Nomenclature, or otherwise given. Dr Ride undertook to place this proposition before the next I.U.B.S. Officers Meeting.

7. *Commission Procedures*

Commissioners were aware that there was a widespread belief that the procedures followed by the Commission were too slow and cumbersome and that there was a large backlog of cases awaiting publication or decision. It was important to correct this conception and to ensure that cases could be dealt with expeditiously. The Secretary was asked to provide details so that Commissioners could respond to criticisms made to them. It was furthermore **RESOLVED** that the Secretariat would prepare an article explaining procedures and how these were implemented in practice. This article could be published in the *Bulletin* and also perhaps in *Systematic Zoology*.

8. *Election of Commissioners at the next I.U.B.S. Assembly*

There would be five vacancies on the Commission to be filled at the meeting of I.U.B.S. to be held at Amsterdam in September 1991; one of these vacancies already existed, but it was agreed not to fill it by the casual vacancy procedure. Calls for

nominations had been widely published and nominations had been received from several countries.

9. *Proposed Suppression for Nomenclatural Purposes of three Herpetological Works*

An application for the suppression of three herpetological works by R.W. Wells and C.R. Wellington had been published in the *Bulletin* (June 1987) and a number of comments had been received and published. Commissioners agreed that, while the taxonomic content of works lay outside its area of involvement, the Commission did have a responsibility to prevent loss of universality in the use of names and it was on this issue that action might be appropriate. Before a vote was taken on the application it would be desirable to receive from the Nomenclature Committee of the International Herpetological Congress a statement, quantified as far as possible, on the loss of universality in the use of names arising from these publications. It was agreed that the Committee should be asked to supply such a statement.

It was pointed out that this case highlighted the difficulties that could arise from the publication of large numbers of destabilising names or nomenclatural acts, and that this problem had been exacerbated by modern publishing techniques. A long-term solution was desirable, and it was suggested that one way would be to compile a list of sources, both journals and book publishers, in which names would have to be published or be registered in order to be accepted as available.

10. *Register of Names*

(a) *Generic Names*

Dr Ride and Dr Tubbs reported on continuing discussions between I.U.B.S., the Commission Secretariat and Biosis on possible liaison in preparing registers of names. Commissioners recognized the value of such lists and welcomed the proposed collaboration with Biosis. A register of generic names could be based on Neave's *Nomenclator Zoologicus* and *Zoological Record*. It would be necessary to provide for breakdown into systematic groups, enabling specialists to identify errors. After appropriate periods for consultation and amendments it could be ruled that only the names on the lists should be accepted as available, with authors and dates as given therein. Other names published before the compilation date of the register would be deemed unavailable. It was important that the data bases should be prepared so that they could be searched in a variety of ways, using fields such as name, author, date, place of publication and systematic group, and that matters such as *nomina nuda*, junior homonyms, type species and actions by the Commission (such as placement on the Official Lists) could be taken into account. A committee (the President, Commissioners Cogger, Ride and Thompson and the Executive Secretary) was set up to give guidance on such lists, and to respond to difficulties that would doubtless arise. It was **RESOLVED** to enter into negotiations with Biosis with a view to developing a data base of generic names as a list of available names. A paper would be prepared for discussion by the Commission and the Section of Zoological Nomenclature at Amsterdam putting forward a formal proposition along these lines.

(b) *Family-Group Names*

Dr Bock described the list of about 1250 available family-group names of living birds prepared under his Chairmanship by the Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature. After a number of remaining problems had been resolved it might be

possible for the Commission to adopt such a list as a base-line so that other previously existing names were deemed not to exist as available names. Workers in other areas could be encouraged to prepare lists of family-group names in their own areas. With this in mind Dr Bock agreed to prepare a note setting out the procedures he had developed for drawing up such a list.

(c) *Names of Higher Taxa*

Although taxa higher than family-group were outside the remit of the Commission it was thought desirable to try to introduce some degree of conformity in the use of such higher taxa. It was suggested that a list, perhaps based on *Synopsis and Classification of Living Organisms* (McGraw-Hill, 1982) which covered extant taxa, should be drawn up for circulation to Commissioners for comment. Commissioners Heppell, Savage and the Executive Secretary would compile this for consideration at the next Commission meeting.

(d) *Specific Names*

It was suggested that the Commission could receive lists of available species-group names in discrete groups of animals, and that, after appropriate consideration by specialists in the groups concerned, such names could be ruled to be the only ones available. It was agreed that this would be discussed by the Commission and the Section of Zoological Nomenclature in Amsterdam.

11. *New Edition of the Code*

At the last Commission meeting at Canberra an Editorial Committee (Chairman: Commissioner Thompson) had been set up to work towards a new edition of the Code. Dr Thompson made a report and explained that there would be an open meeting of the Commission on 5th July to consider possible amendments to the Code. Additionally, an ICSEB Round Table Discussion on 6th July would have a more general discussion on issues of biological nomenclature involving the Botanical, Zoological and other Codes.

There was general agreement that a new edition should not follow the numbering of Articles in the 3rd Edition since a number of closely related issues were dispersed throughout the Code and needed to be brought together.

A small group of Commissioners met after the formal conclusion of the Commission meeting to identify issues for further consideration at the Commission's Open Meeting on 5th July.

12. *Conclusion*

In closing the meeting, the President expressed the view that the meeting had made significant progress and that it was important to emphasise to the zoological community the positive approach adopted by the Commission. He reminded Commissioners that the centenary of the Commission's establishment would occur in 1995 and that recognition of this, perhaps in the form of a Centenary History, would be appropriate.